

BALLOON FOLDING APPARATUS, METHODS AND PRODUCTS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Medical balloons are used in the body in a variety of applications including as dilatation devices for compressing plaque and for expanding prosthetic devices such as stents at a desired location in a bodily vessel. Because it is typically necessary for the balloon to traverse a tortuous anatomy as it is being delivered to the location in a bodily vessel, it is desirable for the balloon to assume as low a profile as possible.

One way to achieve a low profile is by folding the balloon to form a number of wings. Current technologies typically employ a number of hard dies, which are moved radially inward toward the center of a partially inflated balloon. The balloon is maintained in a partially inflated state until the dies have reached the end of their stroke. A vacuum is then applied to the balloon to deflate the balloon and form wings that conform to the configuration of the dies. The wings may then be wrapped or rolled around the circumference of the balloon. This method is not effective, however, for forming wings with undercuts or multiple layers.

Where a balloon with wrapped wings is used to expand a stent, a rotational moment is imparted on the stent as a result of the unfolding of the wings as the balloon expands. The interaction between the stent and the balloon may cause undesirable wear to the stent and/or balloon. Where the stent comprises a coating, the rotational movement may damage the coating and may damage the wall of the vessel in which the stent is located.

Balloons with rolled wings also exhibit non-circular, irregular cross-sections. The irregular cross-section can facilitate contact between adjacent struts of a crimped-on stent. This contact can, in turn, lead to bonding between adjacent struts on coated stents when the stent is sterilized and the coating softens.

There remains a need for innovative methods for folding balloons, which avoid some of the problems that may result, in certain circumstances, from balloons having rolled wings. There also remains a need for innovative methods for folding balloons, in particular where multi-layer folds are desired.

All US patents and applications and all other published documents mentioned anywhere in this application are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Without limiting the scope of the invention a brief summary of the claimed embodiments of the invention is set forth below. Additional details of the summarized

embodiments of the invention and/or additional embodiments of the invention may be found in the Detailed Description of the Invention below.

A brief abstract of the technical disclosure in the specification is provided as well for the purposes of complying with 37 C.F.R. 1.72.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one embodiment, the invention is directed to a method of configuring medical balloon catheter assembly comprising the steps of providing a medical balloon, at least partially inflating the medical balloon, forming a plurality of primary lobes extending from a central portion of the balloon and spaced about the periphery of the balloon and manipulating at least one primary lobe to form at least two secondary lobes therefrom. Finally, the balloon is deflated.

The primary lobes may be formed by applying a radially inward force to the balloon at one or more locations. A plurality of first impinging members spaced about the periphery of the balloon may be directed radially inward to apply the radially inward force to the balloon.

Some or all of the primary lobes may be manipulated so as to form at least two adjacent secondary lobes from each primary lobe that has been manipulated. Desirably, a radially inward force is applied to each primary lobe during the manipulating step to form a pair of secondary lobes from each primary lobe. A plurality of second impinging members spaced about the periphery of the balloon may be directed radially inward to apply the radially inward force to the primary lobes and form the secondary lobes. Some or all of the primary lobes may also be manipulated to form at least three secondary lobes. This may be accomplished by a variety of methods including by impinging two or more second impinging members inward against each primary lobe. In one embodiment of the invention, a first secondary lobe, a second secondary lobe and a third secondary lobe are formed from each primary lobe. The first secondary lobe is larger than the second secondary lobe and the third secondary lobe.

The inventive method may further comprise the step of applying a vacuum to the balloon following formation of the secondary lobes to deflate the balloon. Optionally, depending on how many secondary lobes are formed from each primary lobe during the deflating step, a plurality of antenna-shaped structures extending from a central portion of the balloon may be formed. Each antenna-shaped structure includes a center antenna portion extending outward from the balloon and a plurality of wings extending from a

first side of the center antenna portion and a plurality of wings extending from a second side of the center antenna portion opposite the first side. In one embodiment, the antenna-shaped structure includes two wings extending from the first side of the central portion of the balloon and two wings extending from the second side of the central portion of the balloon.

The inventive method may optionally comprise the further step of wrapping the deflated secondary lobes about the central portion of the balloon. Desirably, secondary lobes that are formed from the same primary lobe are wrapped in opposite directions from one another about the central portion of the balloon. This may be accomplished, for example, by wrapping every other secondary lobe in a first direction about the central portion of the balloon and subsequently wrapping any unwrapped lobes in a second direction opposite the first direction about the central portion of the balloon.

Upon completion of the wrapping of the balloon, desirably each pair of secondary lobes includes a first secondary lobe, which overlaps, with one secondary lobe from an adjacent pair of secondary lobes and a second secondary lobe, which is overlapped by one secondary lobe from another adjacent pair of secondary lobes.

The wrapping of the balloon may be accomplished through a variety of methods including by using a plurality of third impinging members to apply a force to every other secondary lobe. Desirably, the force will be directed toward the central portion of the balloon. A plurality of fourth impinging members may then be used to apply a force to every remaining unwrapped lobe to wrap the remaining lobes. Desirably, the force will be directed toward the central portion of the balloon.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to a method of forming balloon wings in a medical balloon comprising the steps of providing a medical balloon with one or more primary lobes therein, forming a plurality of secondary lobes from each primary lobe by applying an inward force to each of the primary lobes and deflating the balloon. Desirably, the inward force is applied to the primary lobes via a plurality of impinging members. The impinging members may be removed following the forming step by optionally moving the impinging members in an axial direction.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to the combination of a medical balloon and an expandable prosthetic device disposed about the medical balloon. The medical balloon comprises a plurality of wings extending from a main balloon body, the wings wrapped about the main balloon body such that upon inflation

of the medical balloon there is substantially no relative rotational movement between the prosthetic device and the balloon.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to a medical balloon having a central portion and a plurality of wings disposed thereabout, the plurality of wings including at least one first wing wrapped in a first direction about the central portion of the balloon and at least one second wing wrapped in a second direction opposite the first direction about the central portion of the balloon. Desirably, the balloon comprises a plurality of first wings wrapped in the first direction about the central portion of the balloon and a plurality of second wings wrapped in the second direction about the central portion of the balloon. The first and second wings alternate with one another about the central portion of the balloon.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to a medical balloon comprising a central portion and a plurality of structures extending from the central portion, each structure having a first wing extending therefrom in a first direction and a second wing extending therefrom in a second direction opposite the first direction. Typically, the structures are in the form of a T-shaped structure or a V-shaped structure. Optionally, the structures may be spaced apart such that each secondary wing is in an overlapping relationship with one first wing.

In another embodiment, the invention is also to the combination of the inventive balloons disclosed herein and a prosthetic device, such as, for example, a stent disposed about the medical balloon. The prosthetic device may include a coating comprising a therapeutic agent.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to the combination of a medical balloon and an expandable prosthetic device disposed about the medical balloon where the medical balloon comprising a plurality of wings extending from a main balloon body. The wings are wrapped about the main balloon body such that upon inflation of the medical balloon there is substantially no relative rotational movement between the prosthetic device and the balloon.

The invention is also directed to an apparatus for configuring a medical balloon of a medical balloon catheter assembly. The apparatus comprises a catheter holder, a plurality of movable blades disposed about a common central point and one or more blade moving devices in mechanical communication with the movable blades, the one or more blade moving devices is capable of moving the movable blades inward toward the common central point.

Additional details and/or embodiments of the invention are discussed below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows a longitudinal cross-section of a portion of a balloon catheter assembly.

Fig. 2 is a transverse cross-section of a balloon catheter assembly with the balloon at least partially inflated.

Fig. 3 is a transverse cross-section of a balloon catheter assembly with primary lobes formed therein.

Figs. 4-6 are transverse cross-sections of a balloon catheter assembly during the formation of secondary lobes.

Fig. 7 is a transverse cross-section of a V-formed balloon catheter assembly.

Figs. 8-11 are transverse cross-sections of a balloon catheter assembly illustrating the wrapping of the wings.

Fig. 12 is a transverse cross-section of a balloon with T-wings.

Fig. 13 shows an arrangement of a balloon and a plurality of impinging members prior to the formation of primary lobes.

Fig. 14 shows the balloon of Fig. 13 with primary lobes formed therein.

Fig. 15 is a transverse cross-section of a balloon catheter assembly that has been manipulated to form three secondary lobes from every primary lobe.

Fig. 16 shows the balloon catheter assembly of Fig. 14 with third impinging members applying a radially inward force to the some of the secondary lobes.

Fig. 17 shows the balloon catheter assembly of Fig. 14 following deflation and the formation of antenna structures.

Fig. 18 shows the balloon catheter assembly of Fig. 17 with the antenna structures wrapped about the balloon.

Fig. 19 shows an inventive balloon with a stent disposed thereabout.

Fig. 20 shows the balloon and stent of Fig. 19 following expansion of both the balloon and stent.

Fig. 21 shows a top down perspective view of an inventive balloon configuring device.

Fig. 22 shows an alternate side perspective view of the inventive balloon configuring device shown in Fig. 21.

Fig. 23 is an exploded perspective view of the front of the balloon configuring device shown in Figs. 21 and 22.

Fig. 24 is an exploded view of the back of the inventive balloon configuring device shown in Figs. 21-23.

5 Figs. 25 and 26 show inventive impinging members which may be used in the device of Fig. 21.

Fig. 27 shows a perspective view of an arrangement of impinging members.

Fig. 28 shows a side view of an arrangement of impinging members.

Fig. 29 shows a slidable impinging member.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

While this invention may be embodied in many different forms, there are shown in the drawings and described in detail herein specific embodiments of the invention. The present disclosure is an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not
15 intended to limit the invention to the particular embodiments illustrated.

For the purposes of this disclosure, like reference numerals in the figures shall refer to like features unless otherwise indicated.

In one embodiment, the invention is directed to a method of configuring a medical balloon catheter assembly such as that shown generally at 100 in Fig. 1.
20 Medical balloon catheter assembly comprises catheter tube 102 and medical balloon 104 disposed thereabout. Inflation lumen 106 is in fluid communication with medical balloon 104. As shown in Fig. 1, inflation lumen 106 is disposed within catheter tube 102. The inflation lumen may also be provided in the form of a dual lumen tube, one lumen of which is in fluid communication with the balloon. Any other suitable
25 arrangement may also be used for the inflation lumen.

In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, as shown in Fig. 2, medical balloon 104 is at least partially inflated and, optionally, fully inflated. At least one, and desirably, a plurality of first impinging members 108 are disposed about medical balloon 104. Typically, first impinging members 108 will have a relatively
30 wide balloon contacting surface. First impinging members 108 are directed inward to form a plurality of primary lobes 110 as shown in Fig. 3. Desirably, primary lobes 110 are spaced regularly about the periphery of the balloon and extend from central portion 112 of the balloon. In the embodiment of 2 and 3, a balloon with three primary lobes is shown by way of non-limiting example. Typically, the balloon will be manipulated to

have four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten or more primary lobes. More generally, the balloon may be manipulated to provide at least two primary lobes.

As shown in Fig. 4, at least one and desirably a plurality of second impinging members 114 are disposed against primary lobes 110, desirably at the middle of the lobes. Typically, second impinging members 114 will have a relatively narrow balloon contacting surface as compared with first impinging members 108. A radially inward force is applied to at least one of the primary lobes by second impinging members 114 so as to form at least two secondary lobes 116a and 116b from the primary lobe 110, as shown in Fig. 5.

Balloon 104 is then at least partially and desirably fully deflated by applying a vacuum thereto to collapse inward and form collapsed lobes or wings 118a and 118b corresponding to secondary lobes 116a and 116b as shown in Figs. 6 and 7.

The inventive V-formed balloon of Figs. 6 and 7 may be wrapped in a number of different ways. One method of wrapping the balloon is shown in Figs. 8-11. As shown in Fig. 8, first impinging members 108 are removed from contact with the balloon. Second impinging members 114 may be left in place or removed and replaced by other impinging members. A plurality of third impinging members 120 are brought into contact with secondary wings 118a and a plurality of fourth impinging members 122 are brought into contact with secondary wings 118b.

Fourth impinging members 122 are moved inward relative to balloon 104 as shown in Fig. 10 and secondary wings 118b are wrapped in a first direction about the central portion of the balloon. Third impinging members 120 are then moved inward relative to balloon 104 as shown in Fig. 11 and secondary wings 118a are wrapped about the central portion of the balloon in a second direction opposite to the first direction. By wrapping secondary wings 118b separately from secondary wings 118a, the possibility of the secondary wings 118a and 118b hitting one another during the wrapping steps is eliminated.

As shown in Figs. 10 and 11, secondary wings 118b are wrapped in a counter-clockwise direction first and secondary wings 118a are subsequently wrapped in a clockwise direction. It is also within the scope of the invention to first wrap secondary wings 118a in a clockwise direction and to subsequently wrap secondary wings 118b in a counter-clockwise direction.

The individual secondary wings 118a may be wrapped simultaneously with one another or may be wrapped sequentially or in any other sequence. Similarly, individual

secondary wings 118b may be wrapped simultaneously with one another or may be wrapped sequentially.

It is also within the scope of the invention to wrap one pair of secondary wings in first and second opposing directions and to wrap the other secondary wings in other
5 ways.

Subsequent to wrapping the balloon, all of the impinging members may be removed.

In accordance with the invention, as few as one pair of secondary wings may be formed and wrapped about the central portion of the balloon. In the embodiments
10 shown in Figs. 2-11, three pairs of secondary wings are formed and wrapped about the central portion of the balloon. Typically, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten or more pairs of secondary wings will be formed and wrapped about the central portion of the balloon. More generally, a plurality of pairs of secondary wings may be formed and wrapped.

The invention is also directed to a medical balloon such as that shown at 104 in
15 Fig. 12 having a central portion 104 and a plurality of wings disposed thereabout including at least one first wing 118a wrapped in a first direction about the central portion of the balloon and at least one second wing 118b wrapped in a second direction opposite the first direction about the central portion of the balloon.

Desirably, as shown in Fig. 12, the balloon comprises a plurality of first wings
20 118a wrapped in the first direction and a plurality of second wings 118b wrapped in second first direction. In the embodiment of Fig. 12, the first and second wings alternate with one another about the central portion of the balloon. The first and second wings form part of a T-shaped structure, shown generally at 124 with hatching,
25 extending from the central portion of the balloon. Each T-shaped structure includes one first wing and one second wing. Desirably, as shown in Fig. 12, each secondary wing 118b is in an overlapping relationship with one first wing 118a.

The invention is also directed to a medical balloon having a central portion and a
30 plurality of T structures and/or V structures extending from the central portion, the structure having a first wing extending therefrom in a first direction and a second wing extending therefrom in a second direction opposite the first direction. Desirably, as shown in Fig. 12, the balloon comprises a plurality of T-shaped structures 124 extending from central portion 112 of balloon 104.

The invention is further directed to a method of configuring a medical balloon in which multiple secondary lobes are formed from primary lobes using impinging members that apply a non-radially inward force to the primary lobes.

As shown in Figs. 13 and 14, one or more pairs of impinging members 114 are disposed about the periphery of balloon 104. One or more primary lobes 110 are formed by moving impinging members 114 substantially radially inward. Impinging members 114 are then repositioned or new impinging members are provided, as shown in Fig. 15, on either side of primary lobe 110 and an inward force applied against primary lobe 110 to form three secondary lobes 116a-c. Desirably, each primary lobe is thus transformed into three secondary lobes. Optionally, as shown in Fig. 15, first secondary lobe 116b is larger than second secondary lobe 116a and third secondary lobe 116c. The first, second and third secondary lobes may also be of the same size as one another. Other size relationships between the first, second and third secondary lobes are also within the scope of the invention.

Desirably, impinging members 114 shown in Figs. 15, 25 and 26 comprise elongate structures such as wires that are held in tension or plastic parisons. The elongate structures may be disposed parallel to the longitudinal axis of the balloon. The required number of elongate structures will depend on how many secondary lobes are to be formed from each primary lobe. Generally, where it is desired to form N lobes from a primary lobe, N-1 elongate structures will be required. The impinging members may also be in the form of bar, rods or any other structure that may be used to apply a force to the balloon without damaging the balloon. Suitably, the impinging members will have a radiused portion that contacts the balloon. The impinging members may be made of metal, polymeric material or any other suitable material. Desirably, second impinging members are removed subsequent to formation of the secondary lobes by moving the secondary impinging members in an axial direction.

The impinging members, when in the form of wires held in tension, may then be removed by releasing one end and pulling or pushing the member in an axial direction.

Balloon 104 may then be deflated, optionally by applying a vacuum thereto. During deflation, as shown in Fig. 16, a plurality of third impinging members 120 may apply a radially inward force to secondary lobes 116b. Typically, third impinging members 120 are in the form of dies having curved faces that match the profile of the balloon. Upon deflation of balloon 104, as shown in Fig. 17, at least one and desirably a plurality of antenna-shaped structures, shown generally at 130, extend from a central

portion 112 of the balloon. Desirably, each antenna-shaped structure 130 includes a center antenna portion 130a extending outward from the balloon and a plurality of wings 130b extending from a first side of center antenna portion 130a and a plurality of wings 130c extending from a second side of center antenna portion 130a opposite the first side. Further in accordance with the invention, three or more wings may extend from each side of the center antenna portion.

Antenna structures 130 may then be wrapped about the balloon by applying a radially inward force to each antenna structure 130 using third impinging members 120.

An inventive balloon with three antenna structures is shown in Figs. 18 and 19. Balloon 104 of Fig. 19 further comprises stent 135 having a plurality of struts 140 disposed thereabout. Upon expansion of balloon 104 and stent 135, the stent remains in contact with the same points on the balloon it was in contact with prior to expansion of the balloon and stent. As shown in Figs. 19 and 20, stent 135 contacts balloon 104 at points of contact 137a, 137b and 137c both prior to and following expansion of the balloon and stent.

The inventive methods disclosed herein may further comprise a heat-set step to facilitate retention of the fold pattern produced by the process. Also, the inventive methods disclosed herein may optionally further comprise the step of disposing a balloon protector about the balloon to assure that the balloon does not unwrap. An example of a balloon protector is disclosed in US 5,893,868. The inventive methods may further comprise one or more steps of coating the balloon with a desired coating. Suitable coatings include retraction coatings such as those disclosed in US 5,490,839, and US 5,738,901 and lubricity coatings such as those disclosed in US 6,176,849.

Any of the inventive methods disclosed herein optionally may further comprise the step of disposing a prosthetic device about the medical balloon. Desirably, the prosthetic device is a stent. More desirably, the stent includes a coating such as, for example, those coatings disclosed below.

The invention is also directed to medical balloons formed by using any of the inventive balloon configuring methods disclosed herein as well as to the balloons described herein in their various configurations.

An inventive apparatus suitable for preparing some of the inventive medical balloons described herein is disclosed below.

In another embodiment, the invention is also directed to the combination of a medical balloon and an expandable prosthetic device disposed about the medical

balloon where the medical balloon comprising a plurality of wings extending from a main balloon body. The wings are wrapped about the main balloon body such that upon inflation of the medical balloon there is substantially no relative rotational movement between the prosthetic device and the balloon. An example of such a combination is shown at 150 in Fig. 19.

The inventive balloon disclosed herein, in many of its embodiments, has a profile that is closer to circular than existing wrapped balloons. This feature results in less damage to the balloon during crimping of a stent disposed thereabout.

The invention is further directed to the combination of an inventive medical balloon such as those disclosed herein and a prosthesis, such as, for example, a stent, with the prosthesis disposed about the medical balloon. Desirably, the prosthesis includes a coating, desirably comprising a therapeutic agent. The term therapeutic agent is intended to include drugs, non-genetic therapeutic agents, genetic materials, cells.

Suitable coatings include polymer coating materials such as polycarboxylic acids, cellulosic polymers, including cellulose acetate and cellulose nitrate, gelatin, polyvinylpyrrolidone, cross-linked polyvinylpyrrolidone, polyanhydrides including maleic anhydride polymers, polyamides, polyvinyl alcohols, copolymers of vinyl monomers such as EVA, polyvinyl ethers, polyvinyl aromatics, polyethylene oxides, glycosaminoglycans, polysaccharides, polyesters including polyethylene terephthalate, polyacrylamides, polyethers, polyether sulfone, polycarbonate, polyalkylenes including polypropylene, polyethylene and high molecular weight polyethylene, halogenated polyalkylenes including polytetrafluoroethylene, polyurethanes, polyorthoesters, proteins, polypeptides, silicones, siloxane polymers, polylactic acid, polyglycolic acid, polycaprolactone, polyhydroxybutyrate valerate and blends and copolymers thereof, coatings from polymer dispersions such as polyurethane dispersions (BAYHDROL®, etc.), fibrin, collagen and derivatives thereof, polysaccharides such as celluloses, starches, dextrans, alginates and derivatives, hyaluronic acid, squalene emulsions, polyacrylic acid, available, for example, as HYDROPLUS® (Boston Scientific Corporation, Natick, Mass.), and described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,091,205, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated herein by reference. Desirably, the coating may be a copolymer of polylactic acid and polycaprolactone.

Non-genetic therapeutic agents include anti-thrombogenic agents such as heparin, heparin derivatives, urokinase, and PPACK (dextrophenylalanine proline arginine chloromethylketone); anti-proliferative agents such as enoxaprin, angiopeptin,

or monoclonal antibodies capable of blocking smooth muscle cell proliferation, hirudin, and acetylsalicylic acid; anti-inflammatory agents such as dexamethasone, prednisolone, corticosterone, budesonide, estrogen, sulfasalazine, and mesalamine; antineoplastic/antiproliferative/anti-miotoxic agents such as paclitaxel, 5-fluorouracil, 5 cisplatin, vinblastine, vincristine, epothilones, endostatin, angiostatin and thymidine kinase inhibitors; anesthetic agents such as lidocaine, bupivacaine, and ropivacaine; anti-coagulants such as D-Phe-Pro-Arg chloromethyl keton, an RGD peptide-containing compound, heparin, antithrombin compounds, platelet receptor antagonists, anti-thrombin antibodies, anti-platelet receptor antibodies, aspirin, prostaglandin inhibitors, 10 platelet inhibitors and tick antiplatelet peptides; vascular cell growth promoters such as growth factor inhibitors, growth factor receptor antagonists, transcriptional activators, and translational promoters; vascular cell growth inhibitors such as growth factor inhibitors, growth factor receptor antagonists, transcriptional repressors, translational repressors, replication inhibitors, inhibitory antibodies, antibodies directed against 15 growth factors, bifunctional molecules consisting of a growth factor and a cytotoxin, bifunctional molecules consisting of an antibody and a cytotoxin; cholesterol-lowering agents; vasodilating agents; and agents which interfere with endogenous vasoactive mechanisms.

Genetic materials include anti-sense DNA and RNA, DNA coding for anti-sense 20 RNA, tRNA or rRNA to replace defective or deficient endogenous molecules, angiogenic factors including growth factors such as acidic and basic fibroblast growth factors, vascular endothelial growth factor, epidermal growth factor, transforming growth factor α and β , platelet-derived endothelial growth factor, platelet-derived growth factor, tumor necrosis factor α , hepatocyte growth factor and insulin like growth 25 factor, cell cycle inhibitors including CD inhibitors, thymidine kinase ("TK") and other agents useful for interfering with cell proliferation, the family of bone morphogenic proteins ("BMP's"), BMP-2, BMP-3, BMP-4, BMP-5, BMP-6 (Vgr-1), BMP-7 (OP-1), BMP-8, BMP-9, BMP-10, BMP-11, BMP-12, BMP-13, BMP-14, BMP-15, and BMP-16. Dimeric proteins such as BMP-2, BMP-3, BMP-4, BMP-5, BMP-6 and BMP-7 can 30 be provided as homodimers, heterodimers, or combinations thereof, alone or together with other molecules. Alternatively or, in addition, molecules capable of inducing an upstream or downstream effect of a BMP can be provided. Such molecules include any of the "hedgehog" proteins, or the DNA's encoding them.

Cells can be of human origin (autologous or allogeneic) or from an animal source (xenogeneic), or genetically engineered if desired to deliver proteins of interest at the transplant site. The delivery media can be formulated as needed to maintain cell function and viability.

5 Other suitable therapeutic agents include antibiotics and radioactive coatings.

The invention is also directed to an apparatus for configuring a medical balloon of a medical balloon catheter assembly. The apparatus comprises a catheter holder, a plurality of movable blades disposed about a common central point and one or more blade moving devices in mechanical communication with the movable blades, the one
10 or more blade moving devices is capable of moving the movable blades inward toward the common central point.

An example of an inventive balloon configuring apparatus is shown schematically at 200 in Figs. 21-24. Apparatus 200 comprises a catheter holder 204, at least one and desirably a plurality of impinging members 114 and a means for moving
15 the impinging members.

As shown by way of example in Fig. 21, the means for moving the impinging members, as shown in Fig. 24 is in the form of a circular plate 213 with a plurality of openings 215 therethrough. Openings 215 are arcuate and angle radially inward. Each impinging member 114 extends from an arm 217 which, in turn, has a circular knob 219
20 extending therefrom as shown in Fig. 24. Each knob 219 is disposed in an opening 215. The knob and opening are sized such that the knob engages the inner walls of the opening.

Circular plate 213 is rotatably associated with support 221 via a cam shaft (not shown) using any means known in the art. Circular plate 213 may be rotated using any
25 means known in the art. One example is a linear actuator device or a piston system for driving a cam. Shown in this embodiment is a linear actuator mount 225 is fixedly attached to support 221 and includes a coupling 227 for a linear actuator (not shown) for driving the cam which in turn rotates the circular plate 213. A bearing housing 223 is mounted on support 221 whereby the cam shaft is adapted to rotate relative to the
30 bearing housing 223. As the linear actuator is driven forward or backward, the cam shaft rotates causing the circular plate 213 to rotate in a first direction or in a second, opposite direction causing arms 217 and impinging members 114 to move radially inward or outward depending on the direction of rotation of the circular plate.

Such assemblies for moving the impinging members is described above by way of example only and are well known to those of skill in the art. Any other suitable device for moving the impinging members may also be used including a piston system.

Impinging members 114, as shown in greater detail in Fig. 25 and Fig. 26, are in the form of a tensioned line 210 which is held by line holder 212 which extend from body 216. Typically, the tension of the line may be adjusted by turning knob 214 clockwise or clockwise to increase or decrease the tension of the member. Desirably, the line is provided in the form of a smooth metal wire to avoid damaging the balloon. Other suitable materials include polymeric cables. By way of non-limiting example, a polyamide based cable may be used. The embodiment of the impinging member of Fig. 26 differs from the embodiment of Fig. 25 in that line 210 as shown in Fig. 26 is supported only at a single end. In the embodiment of Fig. 26, the line will typically be in the form of a rigid polymeric material.

Impinging members 114 are shown in an arrangement along with impinging members 108 in perspective view and in side view in Figs. 27 and 28. Impinging members 108 have a relatively wide balloon contacting surface as compared with impinging members 114. Any suitable material may be used for impinging members 108 including polymeric materials and metals. The balloon contacting surface of the impinging member should be smooth to avoid damaging the balloon.

The impinging members 108 and 114 of device 200 operate in unison. Inventive balloon configuring devices may also be provided in which impinging members 108 are controlled independently of impinging members 114. This may be accomplished by driving each of the impinging members shown in Figs. 27 and 28 with a piston (not shown). The pistons driving impinging members 108 would be controlled independently of the pistons driving impinging members 114. A balloon configuring device may also be provided where each of the impinging members is independently movable, such as with independently controlled pistons. The device may also be configured so that each of the pistons may be slidable along a track. Fig. 29 is a schematic illustration showing impinging member 114 mounted on track 231 allowing for the impinging member to be withdrawn not only in a radial direction but also in an axially direction.

The above disclosure is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. This description will suggest many variations and alternatives to one of ordinary skill in this art. All these alternatives and variations are intended to be included within the scope of

the claims where the term "comprising" means "including, but not limited to". Those familiar with the art may recognize other equivalents to the specific embodiments described herein which equivalents are also intended to be encompassed by the claims.

Further, the particular features presented in the dependent claims can be
5 combined with each other in other manners within the scope of the invention such that the invention should be recognized as also specifically directed to other embodiments having any other possible combination of the features of the dependent claims. For instance, for purposes of claim publication, any dependent claim which follows should be taken as alternatively written in a multiple dependent form from all prior claims
10 which possess all antecedents referenced in such dependent claim if such multiple dependent format is an accepted format within the jurisdiction (e.g. each claim depending directly from claim 1 should be alternatively taken as depending from all previous claims). In jurisdictions where multiple dependent claim formats are restricted, the following dependent claims should each be also taken as alternatively
15 written in each singly dependent claim format which creates a dependency from a prior antecedent-possessing claim other than the specific claim listed in such dependent claim below (e.g. claim 3 may be taken as alternatively dependent from claim 1; claim 4 may be taken as alternatively dependent on claim 2, or on claim 1; claim 5 may be taken as alternatively dependent on claims 1,2, or 3; etc.).

20 This completes the description of the preferred and alternate embodiments of the invention. Those skilled in the art may recognize other equivalents to the specific embodiment described herein which equivalents are intended to be encompassed by the claims attached hereto.